

Doris' unwavering dedication to honoring the author of our national anthem.

CONGRATULATIONS TO MR. WES
FREELAND

HON. FRED UPTON

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. UPTON. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize the accomplishments of a great community leader and a good friend, Mr. Wes Freeland. This year, after more than thirty years, Wes is stepping down as Kalamazoo County Administrator. Though his career with the county may be drawing to a close, his service to our community will continue as Wes takes a position with the Kalamazoo Foundation.

Under his steady hand and trusted leadership, Wes guided the county's finances through good economic times and bad. He has played a role in guaranteeing our region's growth and helped paved the way for many more years of financial stability.

Wes will continue to play a leading role in helping to shape the region. The Kalamazoo Foundation is dedicated to supporting our community by providing a wide variety of resources to support education, housing, and economic development.

Mr. Speaker, I know that all of my neighbors in Kalamazoo County join me in thanking Wes for his many years of support, dedication and leadership. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Wes for his great work and wishing him all the best in his new position.

KEEP KIDS SAFE AT SCHOOL ACT

HON. VIC FAZIO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. FAZIO of California. Mr. Speaker, today I introduce the Keep Kids Safe at School Act along with 41 of my colleagues. I am pleased that, during this time of polarized political climate, Members from both sides of the aisle have come together to formulate sound policy to safeguard our children.

Last spring, a fifteen-year-old Rio Linda High School student from my district was brutally raped and murdered by a custodian after school. This tragedy could have been prevented had school authorities used a database that could detect the employee's prior interstate criminal history. Although a thorough California check was conducted, an interstate background check would have detected the man's prior convictions—including rape—from neighboring states.

This senseless crime has shaken the small, normally peaceful Rio Linda community—a suburb just north of Sacramento. However, this tragedy provides us all with a lesson. Crime has no face; it doesn't discriminate; it can affect us at any time; it can shatter our safest havens; and it crosses socio-economic boundaries.

My bill would help to prevent this tragedy from occurring again. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act amends the current National Child

Protection Act of 1993. Under the National Child Protection Act, Congress established an interstate identification network which allows for a voluntary background check on child care providers and volunteers.

Already this system has caught dozens of potential child predators in California, Texas and Florida alone.

In California, the background checks have served as a measure which produces results. Between July 1995 and July 1996, 27,564 background checks were conducted at the state and federal level. Of those cases, 606 applicants were found to have a criminal history. Of the number of applicants denied credentials, 95% of the denials were based upon the information discovered in the background checks.

School employees, even those who don't provide care or supervise our children, have access to our children every day. In the morning before school, for example, cafeteria workers may be the first to greet our children. In the afternoon, long after the teachers are gone, custodians or other maintenance workers are on school grounds while our children participate in extracurricular activities.

Parents deserve to feel at ease when they drop their children off in the morning. And kids have the right to feel secure in order to maximize learning. According to the FBI, 19 states don't have laws in place that conduct background checks on all school employee. And four states don't administer background checks for any school employees.

The Keep Kids Safe at School Act is far from a Big Brother policy. It simply builds on an existing law which has proven results for day care workers and encourages states across the country to use this same voluntary system for those employed by our schools.

In addition, this legislation will work as a deterrent to potential child predators. Those with a criminal history won't think twice about applying knowing that they'll get caught. This bill sends a clear message to child predators—our commitment to protecting our children is real. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act will help prevent other tragedies.

The implementation of the Keep Kids Safe at Schools Act will save states and communities time and dollars. Background checks will not only detect child predators, but will provide other criminal history which could save schools thousands of dollars by preventing theft or other crimes.

This is a common sense proposal. The Keep Kids Safe at School Act will deter predators, save schools money and protect our children—period. Let's close the loop-hole, and give our states the tools they need to safeguard our kids—support the Keep Kids Safe at School Act.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE
LINFIELD SCHOOL

HON. KEN CALVERT

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. CALVERT. Mr. Speaker, in 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower established the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports through an executive order as part of a national campaign to help shape up Ameri-

ca's younger generation. In 1966, the Presidential Physical Fitness Award was initiated by President Johnson and is a prestigious accomplishment.

On October 1, 1998, the Linfield School in Temecula, CA, was designated as the 1997–98 President's Challenge State Champion School for Category II schools in California. The State Champion Award is presented to schools with the highest number of students scoring at or about the 85th percentile on the President's Challenge, a fitness awards program for children ages 6 through 17. The Linfield School had more than 82 percent of their student body score at or above the 85th percentile in the fitness program.

The five assessments of the President's Challenge measure four components of physical fitness: a one-mile run/walk for heart and lung endurance, curl-ups for abdominal strength and endurance, a "sit and reach" stretch for muscular flexibility, pull-ups for upper body strength and endurance, and a shuttle run for agility and explosive power.

On behalf of the residents of the 43rd congressional district, I congratulate the Linfield School for this award and commend them for recognizing that physical activity is an important component of health and development for future generations.

TRIBUTE TO COMMANDER JOSEPH
A. SPATA

HON. C.W. BILL YOUNG

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, October 1, 1998

Mr. YOUNG of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize an outstanding Naval Officer, Commander Joseph A. Spata, who has served with distinction for the past 25 months for the Assistant Secretary of the Navy, Financial Management and Comptroller.

It is a privilege for me to recognize his many outstanding achievements and commend him for the superb service he has provided to the Navy, the Congress, and our great Nation as a whole.

As the Chairman of the Appropriations Subcommittee on National Security, I want to thank Joe in particular for the tremendous assistance he has given me and my staff since August 1996. In his position as Deputy, Appropriations Matters Office, Joe has provided us with timely and accurate support regarding Navy plans, programs and budget decisions. These invaluable contributions have enabled our Subcommittee and the Department of the Navy to strengthen our close working relationship and to help ensure that we maintain the most modern, well trained and well equipped naval force attainable for the defense of our great nation.

Mr. Speaker, as with so many of our men and women in uniform, Joe Spata and his wife Eileen have made many sacrifices during his naval career. As they embark once again on that greatest adventure of a Surface Warfare Officer's career, command at sea of U.S.S. *Moosbrugger* (DD 980), I would ask my colleagues to say thank you to Joe Spata for his yeoman's service in working with our Committee, to wish him every success as Commander, and to pray that he always have fair winds and following seas.